

Worksession

Agenda Item #	9
Meeting Date	January 12, 2004
Prepared By	Brett Linkletter
Approved By	Richard M. Finn, City Mgr.

Discussion Item	Proposed Re-Forestation Plan for the City of Takoma Park
Background	There has been concern that the urban forest in Takoma Park may be decreasing over time. City Staff has proposed to acquire data to measure the pattern of changes to the urban forest (canopy), and if it is in decline, to determine by how much. Then, assuming the data shows an overall decrease over time, the City would develop replanting goals for both private and public property.
Policy	<p>The re-forestation plan has five general goals. 1) To determine the pattern of urban forest canopy changes in the City over time and to establish benchmarks, 2) To develop a plan to increase the canopy cover on City owned property, 3) To develop a plan to increase the canopy cover over private property, 4) To maintain pre-existing trees in the best way possible to minimize losses, and 5) To reach a forestation goal throughout the City and maintain that goal indefinitely.</p> <p>The information retrieval to determine patterns and establish benchmarks will be acquired from American Forests and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) of Montgomery County. American Forests can provide Landsat data for past history to help develop a pattern and fairly current data from the City Green software to establish a benchmark. The DEP of Montgomery County can provide information that could also be very useful with benchmarks and with future considerations.</p> <p>The tree acquisition aspect for both public and private property has several components and contingencies. The main points are to increase the planting budget in the Urban Forest Division, develop affordable tree sources, and create an on site nursery to develop an inventory of many trees at different stages of development.</p> <p>Funding possibilities for the plan: 1) Raise taxes by 1/2 cent per \$100.00 of assessment. This would generate approximately \$43,000. 2) Charge homeowners \$25.00 for waivers. Homeowners currently pay nothing when they receive a waiver when applying to remove a tree. With 105 waivers issued last year, approximately \$2,625.00 could be generated. 3) Charge homeowners \$50.00 instead of \$25.00 for tree removal permits and use the extra \$25.00 toward the Re-Forestation Plan. With 125 permits issued last year, the City could anticipate generating approximately \$3,125.00 by this method and \$6,250.00 if the entire \$50.00 is put toward the plan.</p>
Fiscal Impact	\$35,000 per year

Attachments	1) Document explaining the purpose, plan of action, and execution of proposed re-forestation plan. 2) Urban Forest Division budget for current FY04. 3) Urban Forest Division budget proposed for FY05 (with proposed re-forestation increases). 4) Proposed General Milestones/Timetable.
Recommendation	Discuss re-forestation plan proposal and direct City staff so staff can move on next steps to implement plan.
Special Consideration	